



**Testimony before the House Agriculture Committee on HB 5711-5716
February 21, 2006**

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee this afternoon. My name is Kelly Dardzinski, and I am an environmental advocate for the Public Interest Research Group In Michigan. PIRGIM is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization with 10,000 members statewide that has been working for consumer and environmental protection for over thirty years.

I am here today to express PIRGIM's concern about two things: first, the content of the bills. Taken together, these bills offer exemptions from state and federal environmental laws, saddle the DEQ with additional tasks for which it has no funding, diverts funds from the Clean Water Grant program and the Pollution Prevention Revolving Loan Fund, and publicizes the names of those unfortunate citizens who live near concentrated animal feeding operations and report the potential human health hazards they witness, then – to add insult to injury – puts them at risk of footing the bill for the cost of the resulting inspections.

Unfortunately, the public had little time to learn about these proposals to let agricultural polluters off the hook – which brings me to my second concern. These bills were introduced at the tail end of session on the Thursday before a three-day weekend, then taken up in committee the following Tuesday, effectively minimizing the opportunity for public input during this stage of the process. PIRGIM will be informing our members about these fast-moving bills, which represent a significant weakening of environmental protections and an attempt to intimidate citizens from making legitimate complaints. PIRGIM urges the committee members not to support this legislation.

Thank you very much for your consideration.